

THE COURIER

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Lucy Larcom's Bethel

Observing nature was a major focus of the life of Lucy Larcom (1824-1893), who spent much time in the White Mountains and in the western Maine town of Bethel. That town, with its spectacular vistas and easy access to mountain views and river valleys, was a special place for this woman, who in the 19th century became one of the best known poets of New England.

According to Shirley Marchelonis in her biography, *The Worlds of Lucy Larcom* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia, 1989), she came to know Bethel in 1876 when she decided to venture into the mountains. Miss Larcom came from Beverly, Massachusetts by steamboat as far as Portland, Maine, then by rail to the Bethel station and from there by carriage to John Russell's Riverside Cottage, which once stood on the site of the present home of Randy and Cathy Autry on Intervale Road. In back of the house, the hill rose steeply and on the crest was a little glen shaded by evergreens. Here was a latticed summer house, which came to be known as "Miss Larcom's Retreat," where she sat, read and wrote her poetry. From this level, she enjoyed a splendid view of the Androscoggin River and the majestic Intervale elms. Mount Moriah and several peaks of the Presidentials, including Madison, Washington and Adams were also part of this visual "feast."

Shirley Marchelonis has observed that Bethel came to be the ideal place for Larcom. As a mountain town, it appeared "delightful" in every way. The poet was apparently captivated by the Androscoggin River and its surroundings, the mountains, and most particularly the outstanding sunsets, which seemed to call her back each year. Not even pleas from her friends in New Hampshire could get her to move from her Bethel resting place.

Born in Beverly, Massachusetts, in 1824, Larcom was a

sensitive and precocious child, early in life developing a fascination with poetry and religion. After her father's death, due to the family's straited circumstances, she, her mother and siblings moved to Lowell, where she began working in the textile mills of that city. It was here that she began writing for several literary magazines.

In 1846, Larcom journeyed to Looking Glass, Illinois, to begin a teaching career, where for several years she learned "what education really is." This experience led to more teaching in Monticello, Illinois and later at Wheaton Seminary (now Wheaton College) in Norton, Massachusetts.

Her enthusiasm for all things literary and interest in history plus her genuine fondness for her students extended her influence beyond the classroom. She published her first book of poetry in 1869 and by 1884 had become a very popular poet. Her poetry was often uneven in quality, simple and unadorned with flexible rhythms and easy rhymes. It can also be characterized by a strong moral tone and numerous spiritual visions which make it appear to today's readers as quaint and lifeless.

The same is not true of her autobiography, *A New England Girlhood, Outlined from Memory*, which was published four years before her death in 1893. This work contains detailed descriptions of life in New England mill villages, focusing particularly on the world of a Lowell, Massachusetts, factory girl.

Larcom's insights into this 19th century work experience make this book a significant contribution to American social and labor history. It also deserves praise for its literary quality.

Larcom's experience as mill worker left her with a lifelong aversion to loud noises. It also created in her, according to biographer Shirley Marchalonis, a continuous struggle between "stillness and stir," an alternating penchant for solitude followed by a period of intense activity. Moreover, her romantic interest in Dr. Frank Spaulding was complicated and

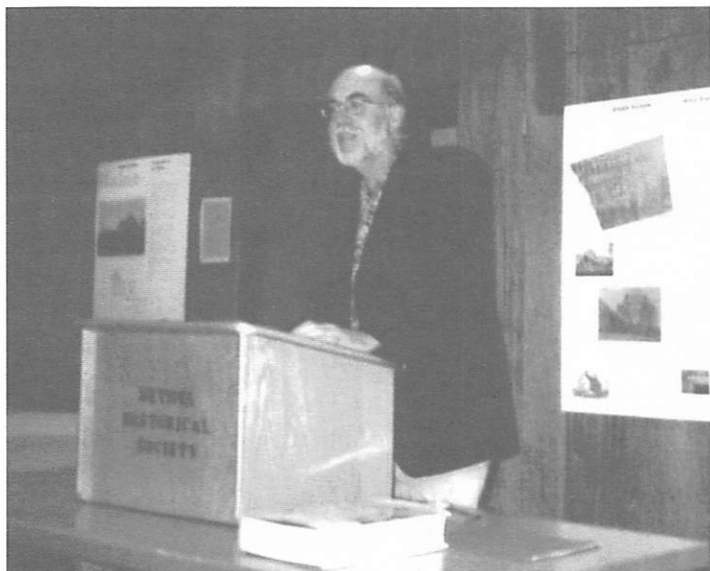


Lucy Larcom (1824-1893)

only resolved by her realization that she would be best living her life alone among good friends such as John Greenleaf Whittier and James and Annie Fields.

Throughout her later adult life, Bethel always remained a favored place where as she wrote Whittier in 1884, she could "read my proof and escape hay fever." It is clear from reading some of her Bethel poems that she was familiar with many of the natural landmarks of the town as is indicated in one included in William B. Lapham's 1891 *History of Bethel*. In what is perhaps her best Bethel poem "On the Ledge," one finds references to "Paradise," the "mountainous West" (the White Mountain Presidentials), and finally the "beautiful meadows and mountains of Maine." This devotion to her Bethel setting knew few limits and the restorative qualities of the place served her so well for the last twenty years of her time on earth.. She always departed with regret, but full of new energy to face the rigors and demands of the literary life.

SRH ■



David H. Watters, Director of the Center for New England Culture at the University of New Hampshire, whose Hall Lecture (August 11) topic was New England's Legacy: Memory and Identity in an American Region.



Winners of the Sudbury Canada Days children's games held on Saturday, August 12

President's Column

As summer winds down, I would like to note several items that are worthy of special recognition.

The high school intern program was an excellent addition to the Society's program this summer. Maureen "Mo" Doyle, a home schooled high school student from Bethel, was selected as the first intern whose stipend was made possible by donations in memory of our outstanding volunteer Judy Haskell. We also enjoyed the additional benefit of having David Jones, a graduate student from the University of Southern Maine's American and New England Studies program, do a public history internship with us as well.

Our programming moved into high gear with the summer months. The Portland Brass Quintet and the Yankee Brass Band, available at no cost to the public, again attracted large crowds. Our summer heritage festival, Sudbury Canada Days, was a resounding success, thanks, in part, to the marvelous encampment and the presence of Maine Theater Festival, which is expected to be an annual event.

Finally, our annual fund letter will be in your hands before you read this. I am hoping that every member will consider responding to this appeal. The Society is depending on the financial support of its members and friends so that quality programming can continue to be brought to the membership and our community. Thanks in advance for your thoughtful consideration.

Allen Cressy

BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE

The Bethel Historical Society is committed to building on its reputation as a premier regional history center that will continue to enrich the educational and cultural life of its community for generations to come. Members and friends have generously contributed to the operations of the Society and to the acquisition of the Robinson House. In order to ensure the long-term maintenance and further development of the Center's facilities, programs, and collections, the Society is seeking new forms of support. You, readers of *The Courier*, are asked to consider making a charitable gift to the Society through a bequest in your will, the establishment of a trust, or a number of other financial arrangements and options that are available. These charitable gifts can be structured to support the Society's mission while at the same time assuring the security of your family. For more information, please contact the Society by calling (207) 824-2908 or (800) 824-2910 or by writing to P.O. Box 12, Bethel, ME 04217-0012 or by emailing: info@bethelhistorical.org

Bowler versus Chisholm, and the Ill-Fated Bethel-Rumford Electric Railway

by Randall H. Bennett

In 1882, Canadian-born Hugh J. Chisholm (1847-1912), a lumber enthusiast and successful partner in the Portland-based Chisholm Brothers Company—producers and distributors of the popular lithographed view books of United States and Canadian scenery, and, in 1884, the first picture postcards in the country—visited the “Great Falls” at Rumford for the first time. Looking back at this visit, he later wrote, “To my mind there came a great possibility, and a great desire to participate in the success and possible development of Rumford Falls. From that moment I was seized with a desire to develop this great water power and within myself made a solemn resolve that no obstacle, be what it may, should stop me in what I was determined to carry out.” Twenty five years later, Chisholm’s determination to organize and control life at Rumford Falls met a bold challenge, one which attracted state-wide attention to this busy metropolis that a quarter century earlier had been not much more than “the falls and a berry pasture.”

The changes that led to the development of Rumford Falls at the end of the 19th century as a center for the production of paper reveal the dramatic transformation of a town that had long depended upon agriculture more than any other economic activity for the livelihoods of its citizens. Beginning with the first engineering study in 1883 of the Falls (the highest east of Niagara), Chisholm initiated a strategy to acquire, through his local agent Waldo Pettengill (1844-1926), over 1400 acres on both sides of the



Ernest C. Bowler

Androscoggin River, thereby securing for his interests adequate tracts for mill sites, along with locations for businesses and residences. By August 1890, he and his associates had purchased the necessary land. They moved ahead to organize the Rumford Falls Power Company with a half million dollar capitalization.



Hugh J. Chisholm

Initially there was a great drive to introduce new businesses to Chisholm’s “model town.” Dams were constructed, canals dug, and an illustrated booklet authorized by the Power Company to attract prospective business ventures, particularly in manufacturing, was published. Although Rumford Falls never became a center for the production of textiles, the Power Company brochure cited capabilities in water power “to run over 1,800,000 spindles or more than 3,800 wool cards.”

As the founder of the Somerset Fiber Company at Fairfield on the Kennebec and, by 1881, of the Umbagog Pulp Company at Livermore Falls on the Androscoggin, Chisholm was the dominant figure in a large number of local concerns by 1900. They included the Rumford Falls Power Company (of which he was a director), the Rumford Falls Sulphite Company, the Rumford Falls Boom Company, the Rumford Falls Light and Water Company, the Rumford Falls Woolen Company, the International Paper Company, the Continental Bag Company, the Rumford Realty Company, the Rumford Publishing Company, and, of course, Oxford Paper Company (now NewPage), the last mill to be organized under his authority.

Moreover, the industrialist or one of his “lieutenants,” as

A complete run of the short-lived *Rumford Citizen* exists in the *Bethel Citizen's* archives (a microfilm copy is held by the Bethel Historical Society), throwing light on a political struggle that developed between certain factions at Rumford Falls and neighboring Bethel during this period. The founder

During September 1906, the *Rumford Citizen* began closely following the proposed railway project. Incorporated that month, the Railway Company made immediate plans for

THE RUMFORD CITIZEN.

VOL. 1 - NUMBER 10

RUMFORD FALLS, MAINE, SEPTEMBER 25, 1906.

PRICE THREE CENTS

ELECTRIC ROAD TO BETHEL.

Railroad Commissioners Have Approved The Articles Of Incorporation.

CHIEF OBSTACLE OVERCOME AND ROAD MAY

EXTEND TO POST OFFICE SQUARE.

Work Will Doubtless Begin In The Early Spring -- All Aboard For Bethel.

A BIG CROWD

To See The Bag Mill Girls

Return To Work.

New Fall Goods Arriving Daily

Consisting of

High grade Men's Suits, Raincoats, Fall Top Coats, Trousers; Boys', Children's, and Youths' Clothing, Boots and Shoes, Gents' furnishings, Hats and Caps all of the latest and newest Styles now ready for inspection. Everybody invited to see our new Lines. No trouble to Show Goods.

Bowler's newspaper, The Rumford Citizen

survey work. Of "regular steam road gauge," the tracks would pass by ten or twelve saw mills on their course along the Androscoggin and its tributaries, and in doing so, would greatly increase timberland values. Touted as the most significant public utility venture since the arrival of the pulp and paper industry at Rumford, the electric line had on its Board of Directors several prominent merchants from the Falls, including Elliot W. Howe, Orville J. Gonya, and, as president of the Board, Everett K. Day, whose department store (the largest in western Maine) was housed in the Strathglass Block.

Although no direct financial interest was reported between Bowler and the railway, one editorial provides a clear idea of his position: "The *Citizen* will champion this enterprise. It has been in touch with the various moves which have been made during the past few months, but the best interests of the project have seemed to demand that nothing be said until the present time."

Recognizing the unsettled atmosphere now created, one farmer who supported the line declared, "Don't you worry about getting help to lay that road. We'll all turn out and dig if necessary." Indeed, if Everett Day's railway experience with a line he supported in Hallowell was any indication of the Rumford-Bethel line's future prospects, things were about to turn for the better. But Hugh Chisholm's vision for the centralization of the bustling community was now threatened with talk of "going into the country to get acquainted with your neighbors" and of scenic parks in rural Rumford set aside for the benefit of the working class.

Without delay, Chisholm and Charles A. Mixer, agent for the Power Company, called a meeting during which the subject of the Falls as a residential village was discussed. In an unexpected, but transparently calculated move, Chisholm authorized Mixer to allow the heads of the Electric Railway Company to sell twenty seven lots for homebuilding purposes. Lots under the Power Company's control would be sold with "restrictions, which Mr. Chisholm thinks necessary to insure the fulfillment of his purposes." Among these qualifications was a restriction on the building of homes deemed "not in keeping with the neighborhood." Mixer was also quick to come to Chisholm's defense, assuring his listeners by declaring that "Mr. Chisholm had this or some similar plan in view from the beginning."

Initially, both the *Citizen* and the *Times* appeared in agreement regarding the advantages of the proposed railway

between Bethel and Rumford. After all, some fifteen years prior to this time, a steamer on the Androscoggin had successfully made its way between the two towns. However, the electric railway was considered a more permanent addition to public transportation, and, realizing that the Grand Trunk Railway already served Bethel, the *Times* soon began to waiver in its enthusiasm for the project. Earlier, the same newspaper had suggested that those traveling from Bethel to Norway (by way of the Grand Trunk) to do business, might consider coming to Rumford instead. What undoubtedly changed the *Times'* sentiment was the knowledge that people in the villages along the line would likely travel to Bethel and then to the Oxford Hills area rather than to Rumford.

In September 1906, actual surveys of the railway were made under the supervision of John A. Jones of Lewiston, who noted, "Not one locality in Maine offers such inducements to the electric railroad builder, as does this one." Comparing the several hours of travel time by horse or car to the swift one hour trip proposed by rail, Jones stated that the location along the river would allow a higher rate of speed than other Maine lines of comparative length. Soon, word spread throughout the countryside of recreational parks, of new hotels (one costing \$20,000 was planned, but never built), and improved markets for locally grown goods. During all this discussion, the *Rumford Citizen* continued to remind readers of such benefits.

Ernest C. Bowler made a point in his editorials to emphasize the dramatic increase in Rumford's liquor traffic, the seemingly "fixed" appointments of public officers, and the suggestion of moving the county seat from South Paris to Rumford as an ill-conceived one. To Mixer's line in the *Times*, "Mr. Chisholm's ideas have not always been to his profit, although beneficial to the town," Bowler replied, "The *Citizen* hails with pleasure this movement towards the amelioration of conditions that were creating such uneasiness." Throughout these challenges, Bowler liked to call his product a "peoples paper," and during the next two years he continued to print in Bethel his columns attacking the one-man rule at Rumford Falls.

By early 1907, hearings had been held in most of the towns along the proposed railway line, to allow a right-of-way to be granted for the electric railway construction on property owned by the several towns. In Bethel, crowds attended one large meeting in the Cole Block's Odeon Hall to proclaim the line and the nearly certain possibility of finally having electricity in the town. As one Bethelite noted later, "There were no kickers or cold water throwers in evidence."

Meanwhile, back in Rumford, tempers were rising and factions were obviously developing. Colonel George Bisbee, speaking at one hearing on behalf of the Chisholm interests, wanted nothing to do with the line and stressed an added cost to taxpayers for new bridges, the repair of damaged water lines and general maintenance of streets the railway would need to use. He was soon further outraged when several lists of supporters were produced. In the end, only a few businessmen refused to sign in favor of the line. The next day, scores of people made their way to the Strathglass Block to congratulate Bowler on his coverage of the hearing, for the voters had, not surprisingly, approved the use of Rumford streets and bridges late the night before.

In January 1907, a clear sign of growing trouble made

itself known when several local Rumford businessmen resigned as officers of the Rumford National Bank in response to pressure to refrain from further support of the railroad venture. The *Rumford Citizen* carried the story with praise for the resignations. Under the heading, "Fierce Gale," the paper also provided an account of how one evening, soon thereafter, a window of the E. K. Day store was blown in and the resulting current of air soon "blew" two more out on the opposite side of the building. Hinting of damage due to something other than "natural causes," another news item recounted the destruction of a huge window in the Gonya Brothers Store. It seems the store sign had made its way through the window on the same gust of wind!

Future issues of the *Rumford Citizen* included similar commentaries, while the *Times* remained strangely silent. A. J. H. McKeeman, a strong railway supporter in the town, while riding with one of Chisholm's mill managers in a sleigh, was struck by a log and knocked to the ground, receiving serious injury. Of the incident and Chisholm's employee, a fellow named Palmer, the *Citizen* recorded, "Mr. Palmer escaped without injury except he seemed to have lost his senses, for he was sought out by the *Citizen* man and for some reason seemed decidedly tongue-tied. We trust he will regain his speech."

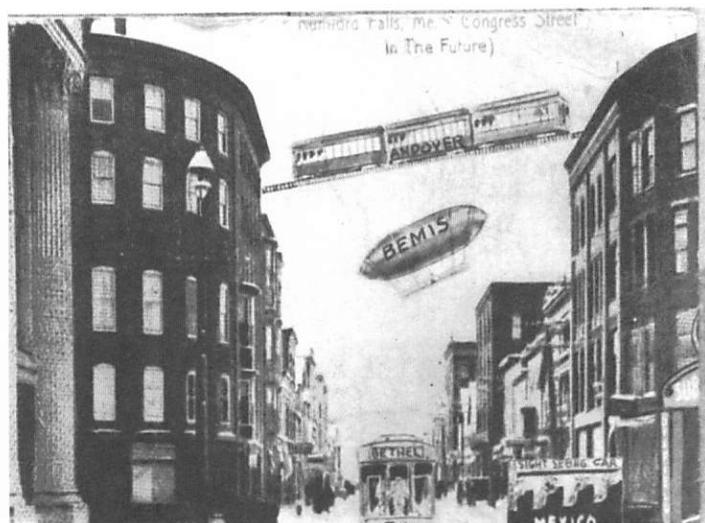
Under the name "Commoner," one writer in Bowler's paper issued declarations weekly against everything from high postal rates to the horror of tenement life, and always with the finger of guilt pointed squarely in Chisholm's direction. Bowler himself warned of the possibility of the Railroad Commissioners denying a charter for the electric railway under "guidance" from certain factions. As 1907 waned, it was only too apparent that little actual work would be done as long as Rumford remained in such turmoil.

One of the major issues of that year had been the election of selectmen for the town of Rumford. As there again were those in favor of the electric line and those against, speeches and political leaflets were very much in vogue. In the end, it was made known (in every possible manner) to mill laborers exactly how much they might "pay" to have the railway built and also what Hugh Chisholm's sentiments were in the matter. As a result, the anti-railway forces were victorious in the municipal elections.

Though articles describing work on the electric railway survey and continued efforts to purchase land along the route appeared sporadically in both Rumford papers, perhaps the circumstance that doomed the chances for the line—and possibly spelled out a final warning to Bowler and his paper—was the destruction by fire of a large part of the Bethel newspaper plant. Following this event, the *Bridgton News* announced, "Rumford, the big city metropolis, is getting large enough, with the population big cities attract, to be wicked." The *News* continued, "The reports of murder, arson and vice of all varieties, indicate that it is keeping up to the requirements!"

Despite the fact that the fire was a direct blow to Bowler and his adherents, support for the electric railway was still much in evidence during the winter of 1907-08, especially with those living along the proposed route. Yet, Rumford Falls remained a tumultuous pocket of distrust and argument.

One of the more interesting byproducts of the controversy



Rumford's Congress Street as it might have been

appeared in the form of a postcard of the street railway that soon was advertised as available at one Congress Street store at Rumford Falls. "It shows a car of the proposed railway," the ad stated, "stalled in front of the store. Then in plain sight is the elevated train from Andover . . . then also there is a flying machine 'Bemis' floating majestically above the tops of the blocks." For many, the railway to Bethel must have seemed nothing but a scheme, but few on either side stood on solid enough ground to accuse the other of deception or fraudulence. And no doubt the many benefits the citizens of Rumford did receive through Mr. Chisholm's benevolence helped in the long term to sway more to his side.

It probably came as no surprise, therefore, when, in April of 1908, E. C. Bowler announced that henceforth the *Rumford Citizen* would attempt to cover more evenly all of Oxford County and in this quest change from a six to a twelve page paper that would be known as *The Oxford County Citizen*. Most importantly, the paper would move back to Bethel permanently. At least for the moment, the confrontation appeared over.

During the next four years *The Oxford County Citizen's* pages continued to include Bowler's hopeful praise of attempts to get the Bethel-Rumford electric railway proposal off the ground. In some of his columns, it was projected to connect onto small lines in Norway, South Paris, Fryeburg, Lovell, Stoneham, or Berlin, New Hampshire, but little action was ever taken.

In Rumford, things were reasonably quiet after 1908 on the railway issue and few opposing Mr. Chisholm's activities sought to indicate their sentiments in print. But for Bowler, who left Bethel for Portland in 1912, remaining to fight for the ill-fated railroad meant "standing still would be going backward." Many years later, writing of his battle with the powerful monopoly at Rumford Falls, Bowler set down the following in his usual facetious style: "This is the History of Oxford County until the period when Hugh J. Chisholm looked upon the Great Falls at Rumford, and said, 'Let there be power, ten years hence,' and said to this man, 'Goeth thou up the River,' and to another man, 'Goeth thou down the River and buy ye all the land of whatever sort ye can bargain for. I, Chisholm, will supply the funds wherewith to pay. Yea, there will be Power here, and I will be It!'" ■

Bethel's Hall House: The "Artistic Bungalow" by Danna Brown Nickerson

The Hall House, owned by Society members George and Danna Nickerson, is Bethel's most recent addition to the *National Register of Historic Places*. The Nickersons purchased the house, located on Kilborn Street, from John K. Brown in the summer of 1997, and began renovation and restoration work. Very few changes had been made to the home since its construction for Dana and Alfaretta Hall in 1910, and care was taken to preserve as much of its original character as possible.

Reflecting an interesting combination of styles, the Hall House includes many features of a bungalow. On the exterior, in addition to overhanging eaves and exposed rafter tails, multiple gables and dormers, wood shingle siding, and walls that flare out slightly at the bottom—all typical Craftsman features—several other elements are also present. The cantilevered corner tower on the living room and the spacious, encircling verandah are a Queen Anne touch, and the nearly square, hip-roofed stable, with its wide eaves, reflects the formal balance of the Italianate style. Inside, the house has many decidedly Craftsman-style decorative elements, from the built-in china cupboard in the dining room and the bookcase in the living room, to the window seat in the tower, which creates a kind of inglenook next to the fireplace. The wide opening between the living and dining rooms is softened by portieres, and the hardwood floors, beautiful natural woodwork, and brick fireplace are all characteristic of the style.

The original owners of the house, Dana and Alfaretta Clark Hall, were both born in Solon, Maine, and began their married life there; their first child, William B., was also born there on 25 December 1872. They moved to Albany, Maine, in the late 1870s, where their daughter Winifred was born 19 December 1879. By 1890 the family had moved to Bethel, and was living at Fairview Farm. Dana was a farmer and a teamster; an item in the 16 September 1920 issue of *The Oxford County Citizen* noted that he was attending the State Fair in Lewiston where he was driving oxen, and that he had visited thirty-one different fairgrounds in that capacity in the past and was considered an expert teamster.

A deed dated 23 June 1910 records the sale of land on what is now Kilborn Street by Eben S. and Joan Stearns Kilborn to "Alforetta" Hall, and shortly thereafter the Halls began construction of their bungalow. It would appear that Dana and Alfaretta built the house as a retirement home since he was 66 and she was 60 at the time of its construction, and both of their children were grown. Theirs was the first house to be erected on the street, which had been laid out in the summer of 1906 to connect Chapman and Vernon Streets on land deeded to the town the previous year by Eben Kilborn and Alberto Copeland. No information has yet been discovered as to who may have designed the house, but it has been suggested that Alfaretta herself drew the plans. Since it is a rather elaborate building with many fascinating details,

it may have been inspired by drawings found in one of the popular house plan books or magazines of the day.

Nothing is known about who constructed the foundation of large stones below ground and stone-faced concrete blocks above, or who did the framing of the house, but the local paper and older town residents have provided some information. An item in the Bethel news column of *The Oxford County Citizen* on 25 August 1910 noted "Mr. Frank Taylor has finished working on Mr. Dana Hall's house..." Taylor advertised in the paper to do bricklaying, plastering, white-washing and general jobbing, so he may well have done a great deal of work on the house. According to Stanley Brown, his grandfather, Seth Mason, did "finish" carpentry for the Halls, including the built-in china cupboard in the dining room, and the bookcase and window seat in the living room. Seth's daughter, Ruth, who later owned the house, used to tell of bringing her lunch there to eat with her father, when she was a student at Gould. Construction progressed quite quickly, and the 6 October issue of the paper stated that Mr. and Mrs. Dana Hall had moved into their new home on Kilborn Street. Written in pencil on the inside of the window seat is the date "September 29, 1910," indicating that it must have been one of the last projects completed in the house.

Originally the first floor of the house consisted of a kitchen and pantry, a dining room, a living room and adjacent entry hall, and two bedrooms, with a hallway connecting the kitchen to the attached stable where the outhouse was located. The second floor was all open attic, and it was possible to go from the attic area over the main part of the house right into the barn chamber. There is still a trapdoor in the floor of the hall off the kitchen where the coal (used as fuel for the hot air furnace) was dumped down into the coal bin in the dirt-floored cellar. As is common in Craftsman-style architecture, the house features several porches. A narrow entry porch near the kitchen, a more formal front porch which is recessed under the main roof of the house adjacent to the living room, and a large wrap-around verandah, which is notable for its lack of steps to the ground, all provided access to the outdoors. The stable initially had a wood ramp leading to the door—a detail now restored—and three small windows indicate where the stalls for the horses were located. A steep stairway led up to the barn chamber, or loft, with its cupola



The Hall House

for ventilation, and another, directly below it, to the barn cellar.

Dana Hall remained active and in good health until February of 1924 when, according to his obituary, he “became an invalid.” He died 3 October 1925 at the age of 78. Following his father’s death, William Hall moved back to Bethel to live with Alfaretta; a profile of him in the 1931 Special Edition of *The Oxford County Citizen* stated that he lived with his mother in her “artistic bungalow on Hall Street.” Shortly after his return to Bethel, a shed was added to the side of the stable, presumably to house his car. Alfaretta died at the age of 85 on 18 June 1935, at which time William and Winifred inherited the property, and the Kilborn Street house was sold to Sherman and Agnes Flu of Haverhill, Massachusetts.

Sherman Flu was an uncle of Sherman S. Greenleaf, who lived just down the hill from the Kilborn Street house and operated an animal hospital and undertaking business in the house on the corner of Vernon and Kilborn streets. Flu was born in Boston, Massachusetts, and worked as a leather buyer in the shoe shops in Haverhill; he, his wife and son lived in Bradford, Massachusetts. The Flus often visited their Bethel relatives, and Sherman Flu was retired when he and his wife, Agnes, purchased the house from the Hall heirs. They used it as a summer home, renting it to various local families during the winter months. Tenants included Leslie Poor, whose wedding to Elsie Potter took place in the living room, the Hedley Wheeler family, and Carl and Ruth Brown. During the Flus’ ownership, the house was known as “Lipstick Cottage” because of the bright red accents painted on the window trim. (He also lined the drive with white-painted rocks, a common landscape feature seen throughout rural Maine at the time.)

In December of 1942, Carl and Ruth Brown and their youngest son, John, moved into the house as tenants. They rented it through the winter, and on 12 August 1943 purchased the property from the Flus. The Browns had

previously lived on the family farm a short distance south of town, and their move into the village was, at least in part, a response to the gas rationing of WW II, making it possible for Carl to more easily walk to the office of the *Bethel Citizen*, where he was editor.

The Browns made several changes to the home in the first few years they owned it. In 1944, they put a bathroom in part of the pantry off the kitchen, and later finished off two rooms in the attic, adding a shed dormer at the rear. They also installed a new hot air oil furnace, and made alterations to the kitchen. John moved out in the 1950s when he married, but returned to live with his mother after his father’s death in 1963. On the death of his mother in 1977, he inherited the house, and remained there until selling to the Nickersons on 3 July 1997.

Since few changes had been made to the house, the Nickersons took care in their renovations to retain as many original features as possible. On the recommendation of their painter, all of the ceilings, which were coated with muresco and couldn’t be repainted, were covered with sheetrock. All of the plaster walls were stripped of several layers of wallpaper, then patched, sealed and painted; the Norway pine woodwork was cleaned and refurbished, and the hardwood floors were sanded and resealed. The only change made to the layout of the house was to divide one first floor bedroom to create a master bath/dressing room area. Work continues on small, but interesting details.

The Bethel Historical Society recognized the Nickersons for their restoration work by presenting them with a Historic Preservation Award in May of 2000. They submitted an application to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission in the spring of 2002 to have the house considered for addition to the *National Register of Historic Places*, and at their 19 July meeting the Commissioners approved the nomination. A few months later, the Nickersons received word that the Hall House had been entered in the *National Register* on 31 October 2002. ■



Sudbury Canada Days Militia Drill, photo courtesy of Donald G. Bennett



2006 Yankee Brass Band concert on the grounds of the Dr. Moses Mason House, photo courtesy of Danna Nickerson

Diary of William S. Hastings

(continued from the last issue)



1942-- July 20, Cloudy. Sprayed & hoed. July

21, Clear & hot. Sprayed & hoed. 10 loads from Farwell's after 11 a.m. July 22, Clear & hot. Sprayed all day. July 23, Clear & hot. Hayed. Surprise blackout. Walter Gray, Lon Wight & I were sworn in as a Commission to re-locate Riley-Newry Town Line. July 24, Clear & hot. Hayed on "Ephraim piece," 12 loads after 1 p.m. Observation Post at night. July 25, Clear & hot. Sprayed & hayed. July 26, Clouding. Went to Whitecap [Mt. in Rumford]. Family got about 60 qts. of blueberries. July 27, Light rain. All day on hay track for Bean Barn. July 28, Cloudy. All day on hay-track. Bethel in late p.m. Ruth went to Greenwood. July 29, Showers. Finished track. Hoed spuds on Horse Pasture. Finished Oxford Cem. Annex plan. July 30, Rainy. Built hog pens in a.m. Norway & Oxford in p.m. July 31, Clearing. Sprayed & hayed. Ruth came home. Rain at night. August 1, Clearing. Butchered a veal, 122 lbs. @ \$.23 = 428.06. Took it to Rumford in p.m. O. P. [Observation Post] at night. August 2, Cloudy. Hayed in a.m. August 3, Clear & cool, windy. Mowed on Farwell's meadow all day. Meeting of Town Committee in eve. August 4, Clear & cool. 2 showers. Fenced in a.m. Hayed in p.m. August 5, Clear & windy. Mowed back yard & weeds in garden. Built pig pen. August 7, Clouding, shower. Sprayed in a.m. Norway & So. Paris in p.m. O.P. in eve. August 8, Clear & cool. Sprayed. White washed the tie-up. Camp after 9:30 p.m. Arrived 11 p.m. August 9, Clouding & rain in p.m. Went up river trail in a.m. Put in window in p.m. Greenwood late p.m. August 10, Clear & warm. Picked beans. Small crop. Started concrete foundation for milk room. August 11, Clear & hot. Built forms and ran cement. August 12, Same. Same job. Worked until 9 p.m. Load platform is done. August 13, Clear & hot. Same job & got 3 loads of hay. Worked 'til 9 p.m. Finished all cement work but floor. August 14, Rain. Norway in p.m. August 15, Clear & hot. Framed milk house. August 16, Showery. Went to camp & worked up a woodpile. August 17, Clear & hot. 6 hrs. for Wallace Kilgore in L7R14 & 15, Newry (Andover W. Surplus). August 18, Clear & hot. 7 hrs. for Elliot Cummings on camp lot in Hutchinson Pond, Albany. August 19, Clear & hot. Hung finish and laid concrete floor in milk house. August 20, Clear & hot. 7 hrs. for Mrs. Alger in Lot 69, Western Lotting Woodstock, Deloraine Cole Farm. At meeting of Town Committee. August 21, Smoky & hot. 8 hrs. for Wallace Kilgore in Lots 4-5-6-7 R 15, Newry. August 22, Clearing & hotter. All day on milk house. Wired & put on wall board. August 23, Clear & cooler. Framed, made & hung two doors in milk house. August 24, Cloudy & windy. 9 hrs. for W. Kilgore in 7 R15, A. W. Surplus. Milk room passed inspection. August 25, Clear. Board of Directors meeting at So. Paris. P.M. in

Registry, 3 hrs. Bill Chadbourne. August 26, Clear & cool. 10 hrs. & finished for Kilgore. Ran line to the top of Puzzle Mnt. & started off at 5:30 p.m. Reached Bear River road at 8 p.m. Kilgore is over 81 and he was with me. Some man! August 27, Cloudy. All day on milk house. August 28, Cloudy. On outside finish. August 29, Cloudy & cool. Outside finish is all done. August 30, Cloudy. Started selling milk. August 31, Clear & hot. So. Paris & Norway.. 4 hrs. for Bill Chadbourne in Registry & going to Millett Hill. September 1, Clear & hot. Started building horse stalls in west end of tie up. September 2, Clear & hotter. Finished stalls. Star meeting. September 3, Showers. John and I worked 10 hrs. for W. H. Stewart in Sumner. John \$.4. September 5, Clear & warm. 5 hrs. in Sumner & finished. 2 hrs. on Hartford map. September 6, Clear & cold. A.M. on covering Observation Post with paper, putting in windows, etc. P.M. dug some spuds & got load of hay. September 7, Clear & cool. Sawed wood for school. Got load of hay. September 8, Cloudy. Picked corn. September 9, Cloudy. 2 hrs. on Hartford map at Court House. 4 hrs. on Pinkham Division Case in Hebron. September 10, Rain. Worked on milk house & then cut corn. September 11, Cloudy, rain. Started Commissioner's line between Riley & Newry, 10 hrs. Wet day. September 12, Cloudy, showery. 10 hrs. on town line. Almost to the top of Wheeler Mnt. September 13, Clear & fine. Greenwood. September 14, Clear & cool. Election day. I was a ballot clerk. Large Republican majority in Bethel. September 15, Clear & warm. We ran over Wheeler Mnt. to Chapman Brook & camped. Thunder storm at 4:45 a.m. Lucky we had a bough shelter. September 16, Cloudy & showers. Ran over Rifle-sight. Tough day! Came down to Williamson Place in two thunder-storms. September 17, Clear & hot. From Rifle-sight Mt. to the range corner 9 & 10 in Riley. Hit the old spotting. September 18, Clear & hot. Ran across Range 9 & hit 15 inches east of the corner after having come 4 miles on N17[degrees] E. Set stone post on line at road above Letter S hill. September 19, Clear & hot. Ran across 15th range in Riley. Also trial line on Bethel-Gilead. September 20, Rain. Round home. September 21, Clear & cool. Ran Newry-Gilead line. Hit 2 ft. from old spruce stump which was the corner. Set & marked a stone post in pile of stones as Gilead-Riley Corner. September 22, Clear & cool. Spotted Riley-Newry town line thru to Merrill Hill brook. Stayed in Gard Brown camp. September 23, Clear & cool. Finished spotting line thru to Range 8, Riley. The line is straight from Gilead corner to Sunday River. September 24, Clear. Started digging seed piece, 125 bbl. September 25, Clear. Dug 145 bbl. September 26, Clear & cool. 9 hrs. for M. Benson in Greenwood. 4 hrs. for Coolidge in Bethel. \$13 paid. Crew dug 103 bbl. September 27, Rain! Line storm. Went to Greenwood in p.m. September 28, Clear & cold. Dug 90 bbl. & finished seed piece. September 29, Clear & cold. Dug on Home Piece. Awful grassy. 69 bbl.

September 30, Clear & warm. Dug 70 bbl. 11 rows. October 1, Rain, clearing. Dug 57 bbl. 9 rows. October 2, Clear & cold. 69 bbl. Star rehearsal. Went to bed at 11 p.m. Got up at 1:15 a.m. October 3, Clear & cold. 106 bbl. 3 hrs. for F. Edwards in swamp. October 4, Clear & cool. 2 hrs. hunting line on B. W. Kimball woodlot. Barbara cut her leg with an axe, 9 stitches. We went to Sunday River. October 5, Cloudy. Dug spuds, 81 bbls. P.M. finished Pinkham Division job in Hebron. October 6, Rain in morning. Housed farm machinery. Dug 81 bu. seed in p.m. October 7, Clear & warm. Dug 175 bu. on [Leslie] Noyes. Finished one piece and started another. Poor crop. Mason meeting. October 9, Clear & warm. Finished Leslie's potatoes. Dug 25 bbls. on ours. October 10, Clear & warm. 166 bbls. today. We went to camp after 7:30 p.m. October 11, Clear & cool. Sawed & split wood. Drove a well-point. Grover's [Brooks] family & John & Edith [Howe], also Father came up. Nice time. October 12, Clear & cool. Dug 185 bbls. + October 13, Clear & warm. 228 bbls. & finished Home Piece. October 14, Clear & warm. 125 bbls. form 2 A before noon & finished our spuds. October 15, Clear & warm. Finished John's spuds. 1 hr. B.W. Kimball, 3 hrs. L. E. Davis, L 19 R 6. October 16, Clear & warm. 10 hrs. in Peru for Rumford Falls Trust Co. October 17, Clear & warm. So. Paris in a.m., 2 hrs. for Jesse Chapman at Registry. P.M. ground oats, stored apples, darkened shed cellar, etc. October 18, Cloudy, showers in p.m. Round home in a.m. Cruised 2 ½ hrs. for Ben Kimball n p.m. Walked home via Osgood's, Brown Place, Buck's, Conroy place. Got some wet. October 19, Showers. 10 hrs. for Trust Co. in Peru. Ran line over Speckled Mt. Tough day. Especially coming off the Mnt. on South side. Nearly perpendicular ledges. October 20, Clear & cool. 10 hrs. in Peru. Hit snag on the south line. Monkey business in the past. Crew tired out so we left it until Nov. October 21, Clear & warm. 8 hrs. for Hugh Stearns in L10R3, Albany. October 22, Rain. Put up spuds all day. Mary Alice got cut in barbed wire. Took 6 stitches to close it. October 23, Fog, thunderstorm. 5 hrs. for Ed Mann in Lot 5 R3, Bethel. October 24, Clear & warm. 6 hrs. for Lawrence Lord & Mason Bros. in Gilead. Paid. October 25, Cloudy. Grover [Brooks], Harry [Brooks], John [Howe] and I went to camp. October 26, Showers. Hunted all day and didn't see a deer. Partridge are quite thick. October 27, Cold & windy. Hunted Glaspie Cove. No luck. October 28, Clear & warm. Missed a running shot. Fired the 12 ga. across the canoe and dumped Grover and me in the Big Lagoon. October 29, Clear & hot. Hunted at Forks & on B Brook Point. October 30, Clear & hot. Up the lake. Left the Tyler Cove at 7 a.m. Hit camp at 9. October 31, Clear & hot. ½ day near McCloud place. Came out in p.m.

(to be continued in the next issue)



Member Profile: Virginia Walker

Virginia Walter was born on 5 July 1929 in Waterville, ME, the daughter of Herman and Elsie Potter. Educated in the public schools of Hancock and Princeton, Maine before coming to Bethel, she attended Bethel Grammar School and graduated from Gould Academy in 1947. The following year she married Donald Walker, who died in 1991. She is the mother of four sons, and has seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Her community activities have included the Methodist Church where she has served as organist, the Chamber of Commerce, the Farm Bureau and the Bethel Historical Society. Now retired, she has worked at the Bethel Inn, the Bethel Town Office and for the National Training Laboratory. At the Society, she has been active as a shop volunteer, member of the Program Committee and as a piano player at the Society during various events. Her hobbies include knitting and music.

In Memoriam

Died, 1 July 2006, Pauline Wieden, Madison, ME,
Senior Member

Died, 5 July 2006, Jay L. Woolsey, Tucson, AZ, Senior
Member

Died, 1 September 2006, S. Eldon Greenleaf, Bethel,
Senior Member

New Life Members

Angela J. Connelly, Portland
David R. Jones, Portland

Book Note

Brimfield Rush: The Thrill of Collecting and the Hunt for the Big Score. By Bob Wyss. Beverly, MA: Commonwealth Editions, 2005. Pp. 289. Cloth. \$21.95.

Brimfield, Massachusetts is a classic New England village with something over 3000 inhabitants sixty-five miles west of Boston and the typical white clapboard church on its attractive town green. Three times a year (in May, July and September) the population swells many times over with undoubtedly the nation's greatest antique show. Several thousand antique dealers and many times that number of buyers from across the United States and the world arrive here to buy and swap all kinds of "treasures." It is important to realize that Brimfield is not a single market, but over twenty fields along Route 20 or Main Street that open on different days. These openings mean a mad rush of customers each time. This book traces the findings of several dealers and collectors during 2003 and 2004. Here is the story of shrewd buyers and sellers with all their successes along with those times when deals were less than satisfactory. It also represents the rediscovery of history, culture and heritage that lingers among the stacks of junk, genuine antiques, reproductions, and yes, fakes. For those interested in antiques and collectibles, this book contains many insights ranging from human behavior to price setting. SRH

For ordering information, please see page 12.

Editor's Corner

This summer has been very busy, as usual. It was the first one in the thirty-two years we have been open at the Dr. Moses Mason House without our consummate volunteer Judy Haskell, who, since 1974, had been involved in house museum tours. We certainly missed her very much, especially with all our special events throughout the year and, of course, as the coordinator of guides for the museum during the summer. Our loss was mitigated to a great extent by the presence of two summer interns, who helped make staffing the museum considerably less challenging. We are grateful to "Mo" Doyle, our high school intern, whose stipend was made possible by memorial donations to establish an internship in honor of Judy Haskell. The other intern, David Jones, came to us courtesy of the American and New England Studies program at the University of Southern Maine. Both worked out well and helped us through what might have been a difficult summer without Judy. Thanks go to everyone who made the summer intern program possible and the volunteers who continue to extend so generously their services throughout the summer.

SRH

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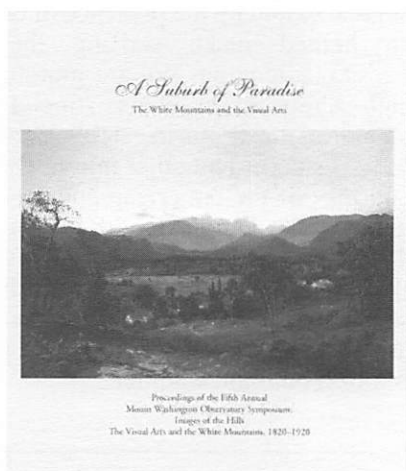
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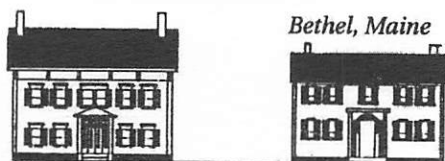
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